

FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT



Icon of Raising Lazarus from the Dead

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT

22 MARCH 2026 ♦ TONE 08 EOTHINON 08 † FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT / SUNDAY OF MARY OF EGYPT

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

Liturgy Book p. 17

ANTIPHNS:

FIRST:

Liturgy Book p. 29

SECOND:

Liturgy Book p. 32

THIRD:

Liturgy Book p. 36/p. 39

Liturgy Book p. 38

ENTRANCE HYMN:

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 8)

St. Mary of Egypt

St. Joseph the Betrothed

Liturgy Book p. 39

Lenten Supplement p. 5

Liturgy Book p. 47

Lenten Supplement p. 6

Liturgy Book p. 50

Liturgy Book p. 60

Hebrews 9:11-14

KONDAKION: Annunciation

TRISAGION:

PROKIMENON:

Tone 8

EPISTLE:

Brethren, when Christ appeared as the high priest of the good things to come, he entered once for all through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands (that is, not as a part of the present creation), nor again by virtue of blood of goats and calves, but by virtue of his own blood, into the sanctuary, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkled ashes of a heifer sanctify the unclean for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the Holy Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!

ALLELUIA: Psalm 75: 12. 2

(Tone 8)

O Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout for joy to God our Savior.

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving.

GOSPEL:

St. Mark 19:32-45

At that time Jesus took the Twelve, and began to tell them what would happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the Scribes; and they will condemn him to death, and will deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him and scourge him, and put him to death; and on the third day he will rise again." And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him, saying, "Master, we want thee to do for us whatever we ask." But he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said, "Grant to us that we may sit, one at thy right hand and the other at thy left hand, in thy glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking for. Can you drink of the cup of which I drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am to be baptized?" And they said to him, "We can." And Jesus said to them "Of the cup that I drink, you shall drink; and with the baptism with which I am to be baptized, you shall be baptized; but as for sitting at my right hand or at my left, that is not mine to give, but it belongs to those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard this, they were at first indignant at James and John. But Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers among the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you. On the contrary, whoever wishes to become great shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be the slave of all; for the Son of Man also has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

HIRMOS:

Lenten Supplement p. 17 / Liturgy Book p. 178

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Lenten Supplement p. 17 / Liturgy Book p. 178

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Events in March

Sunday Morning, March 23

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT:
SUNDAY OF ST MARY OF EGYPT**

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

ST. JOSEPH BREAKFAST

Church Hall 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Vesperal Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, March 24, 5:30 p.m.

Lazarus Saturday: March 28

Divine liturgy: 10 a.m.

Youth activities following

Saturday Evening, March 24

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, March 24

SIXTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT:

PALM SUNDAY

Blessing & Procession: 10:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy following

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow up on us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

23 March: Edmund Cress

24 March: James Zaydon, 35th year remembrance, by Jim and Betsy Zaydon

2026 WEEKLY COLLECTION

February 25

Weekly Offering:	\$ 817.00
Pascha Flowers :	\$ 205.00
<u>Candles:</u>	<u>\$ 1.00</u>
Total:	\$ 1,023.00

A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES are often fulfilled in new and definitive ways in the Gospels. Thus Isaiah's prophecy of a young girl's conception would be decisively fulfilled in the conception of Christ by the ever-virgin Mary.

St Paul recognizes another kind of connection between the Old and the New Testaments. In Colossians 2:17 he notes that Old Testament observances "... *are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.*" When we stress the connection between actual persons, events, places, and institutions of the Old Testament, and the corresponding reality in the New Testament which they foreshadowed, this is called **typology**. Thus, for example, the Mosaic Passover (Pascha) celebrating the passage of the Hebrews from slavery to freedom is a "type" of the New Passover (Pascha) in which Christ leads humanity from death to eternal life.

Typology is most developed in the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the temple and the sacrificial role of its priests. When the temple was destroyed and the last High Priest died in AD 70 the Jews were devastated. Here the Christ-believing Jews were reassured that we have the ultimate High Priest in the Lord Jesus of whom earlier High Priests were but a type (see Heb 7:23-8:1). "*For the Law appoints as high priests men who have weaknesses, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever*" (v. 28).

The Temple and its Sacrifices The arrangements of the Jewish tabernacle and its permanent version, the temple, are set forth in the Torah (Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers) according to a "pattern" shown to Moses on Mount Sinai. The tabernacle/temple is thus a "type," a reality in itself pointing to something beyond. In Hebrews 8:5 it is described as "*the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle.*"

In the Book of Revelation, St John describes his vision of eternity in similar terms: "*And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened*" (Revelation 15:5). He describes angels in white robes with their chests girded with golden bands (like deacons) and white-robed elders making prostrations. There is singing and incense and the Lamb who stands before the throne of God, having redeemed mankind by His blood.

The earthly temple and its rites were a shadow patterned after the eternal liturgy of heaven where an eternal High Priest would offer Himself to the Father to renew His creation. The sacrifices of the earthly High Priest were types of the sacrifice of Christ the Lamb, who stands before the throne of God bearing the blood of His own self-offering for the salvation of the world.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the work of Christ is described in terms of the Jewish High Priest and the temple. The High Priest, we are told, went into the innermost part of the temple, called the Holy of Holies, only once a year (on Yom Kippur) with the blood of the sacrificed sin offering. But now, Christ the eternal High Priest has entered "*the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Holy of Holies once for all, having obtained eternal redemption*" (Heb 9:11-12). "*Now to appear in the presence of God for us*" (Heb 9:24). He always lives to make intercession for those who come to God through Him (see Heb 7:25).

The Temple and Our Churches

The temple, its priesthood and its sacrifices, then, were but types of the eternal sacrifice of Christ which would achieve eternal redemption once for all. Our Eastern Christian temples and our sacrifice of praise, the Divine Liturgy, do more than point us to the heavenly liturgy; through them we are connected to the eternal and ongoing dimension of Christ's sacrifice which is at the center and summit of all true worship in both the Old and New Testaments.

The very design of our churches is meant to show that the mystery of salvation, which was foreshadowed in the Old Testament temple, has been fulfilled in Christ. Many elements are similar. We have the holy place (the solea) and the holy of holies (the altar), the incense, the cherubim (ripidia) and the candelabrum. Other elements indicate that what were types have been fulfilled. In place of the jar of manna (see Heb 9:1-5) we have the Eucharist. In place of the Tablets of the Law or the Torah we have the Gospel. In place of Aaron's rod we have the holy cross. And in place of the impenetrable veil we have the iconostasis which makes both visible and accessible the mystery of our salvation in Christ.

What Happens in the Liturgy

Our Divine Liturgy is a kind of living icon, using the imagery of the temple's sacrificial rite to show that the Eucharist is our participation in Christ's unique sacrifice. The Liturgy is neither a separate sacrifice nor a mere remembrance of Christ's sacrifice, but an actual entry into that sacrifice, possible because it is offered in "God's time" rather than ours.

As the sacrificial animals were killed outside the holy place and Christ was killed outside the Holy City, the oblations are prepared outside the holy place, in the prothesis (in smaller churches the prothesis is to the side of the holy place).

As the animals were brought by the Levites to the priests to be offered, the holy gifts are brought by the deacons and priests to the bishop who takes them into the holy place.

As the High Priest took the annual sin offering behind the veil into the Holy of Holies, Christ is described as taking His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary behind the veil. When the oblations are placed on the holy table, the doors and curtain are closed and the prayer of offering is recited "behind the veil." This imagery is lost, of course, when the doors and curtain are never closed.

As Christ, having made His offering, remains before the presence of the Father interceding "*for those who come to God through Him*" (Heb 7:25), so the celebrant, after the holy gifts have been offered and sanctified, stands before the holy table making intercession for the entire Church, the living and the dead.

As the sacrificial offerings in the temple would then be shared among the priests and those who offered them, the Eucharist is distributed first to the clergy and then to the members of the congregation.

And so we too have a High Priest, whose sacrifice takes away the sin of the world. And through the Divine Liturgy we can connect with that unique and eternal sacrifice again and again. "*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus... let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith*" (Heb 10:19, 22).

Christ's sacrifice of His whole being is accepted by the Father. For our offering to be joined to His it must also be the complete offering of "ourselves, one another and our whole life" to Him. May the remaining days of the Fast remind us that we are not created to be satisfied by the temporary pleasures of acquisition and consumption but by the everlasting joys of the heavenly liturgy.

APRIL 23: ST. GEORGE THE GREAT

“LARGER THAN LIFE” is a fitting description for this saint who has become the patron of so many nations and peoples. George the Great-Martyr and Trophybearer (c.280-303) was born to a prominent Greek Christian family in Palestine. His father was a military official from Cappadocia and his mother from Lod (Lydda). When George’s father died, mother and son went back to Lod where he was raised.

The young George aimed at a military career like his father and at the age of seventeen went to Nicomedia, the imperial capital in Asia Minor, to present himself for the emperor’s service. Emperor Diocletian had known George’s father and welcomed him into the Roman army. By his late 20s George held the rank of tribune and served in the imperial guard.

The Persecution of Diocletian

In AD 293 Diocletian had instituted a “tetrarchy,” entrusting the rule of the Roman Empire to four leaders: two emperors (Diocletian and Maximian) and two Caesars (Galerius and Constantius) as part of his program to revitalize the empire. His plan also involved restoring temples and cults of the ancient gods as a way of instilling “Roman pride.” Christians supported the empire but resisted its identification with the gods and goddesses of antiquity.

Christian historians have long described the events of 302-311 as the “persecution of Diocletian,” but in fact it was instigated by Galerius. His mother, a pagan priestess, loathed the Christians for avoiding her festivals and passed on those sentiments to her son. He instituted the persecution of Christians in the territory he ruled and urged the same throughout the empire.

In the previous forty years Christians had become increasingly influential in public life and in the military. Under the tetrarchy, however, Christians were increasingly blamed for the failure of the ancient gods to answer the prayers of their devotees. In 299, for example at the end of a war with Persia, Diocletian and Valerius had stopped at Antioch and were consulting oracles there to determine their future course. The diviners blamed the presence of Christians in the imperial retinue for their own failure to interpret the future.

In the year 302, Diocletian was again at Antioch. A sacrifice was being offered in the palace when a Christian deacon interrupted and publicly denounced it. When a few months later fire broke out in the imperial palace at Nicomedia Galerius convinced Diocletian that it was a revolt of some Christians on his staff. The result was described by the fourth century historian, Eusebius:

“It was the nineteenth year of Diocletian’s reign [AD 303] and the month Dystrus, called March by the Romans, and the festival of the Savior’s Passion was approaching, when an imperial decree was published everywhere, ordering the churches to be razed to the ground and the Scriptures destroyed by fire, and giving notice that those in places of honor would lose their places, and domestic staff, if they continued to profess Christianity, would be deprived of their liberty. Such was the first edict against us. Soon afterwards other decrees arrived in rapid succession, ordering that the presidents of the churches in every place should all be first committed to prison and then coerced by every possible means into offering sacrifice” (Eusebius, *History of the Church*, VIII.2).

The Martyrdom of St George

George stood up for his faith. He resisted the bribes Diocletian offered if he were to worship the Roman gods, and remained firm when those bribes turned to threats. Condemned to

death, George gave away his belongings to the poor and submitted to torture. Later writers described all manner of tortures said to have been inflicted on St. George. Perhaps the most astute judgment on those writings is that of Pope Gelasius I who stated that George was among those saints “whose names are justly revered among men, but whose actions are known only to God” (*De Libris recipiendis*, 494).

George was beheaded outside the walls of Nicomedia on April 23, 303. His body was returned to Lod where Christians began to revere him as a martyr. In the time of Constantine the Great, a church was built over the Saint’s grave. There has been a shrine at this site from the fourth century until the present day.

Another Palestinian shrine to St George, at Beit Jala, is frequented by numerous Pilgrims – Muslims as well as Christians. An Orthodox church, it nevertheless found a place in Taufiq Canaan’s *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine*. It may be that, while many Palestinians were willing to accept Islam during the Arab and Egyptian invasions, they were not willing to give up St. George.

Persecution Ends in 311

George’s apparent defeat at the hand of Diocletian was actually a victory over him and, by extension, over all evil. For this reason St George is called “the Trophy-bearer.” That victory would soon become widespread in the Roman world.

In AD 311, Galerius ended the Great Persecution which he had instigated in 303. Having contracted a particularly loathsome disease, he sought to appease the Christian God. Both Lactantius (XXXIV) and Eusebius record this Edict of Toleration:

“Among the other steps that we are taking for the advantage and benefit of the nation, we have desired hitherto that every deficiency should be made good, in accordance with the established law and public order of Rome; and we made provision for this – that the Christians who had abandoned the convictions of their own forefathers should return to sound ideas. For through some perverse reasoning such arrogance and folly had seized and possessed them that they refused to follow the path trodden by earlier generations (and perhaps blazed long ago by their own ancestors), and made their own laws to suit their own ideas and individual tastes and observed these; and held various meetings in various places.

“Consequently, when we issued an order to the effect that they were to go back to the practices established by the ancients, many of them found themselves in great danger, and many were proceeded against and punished with death in many forms. Most of them indeed persisted in the same folly, and we saw that they were neither paying to the gods in heaven the worship that is their due nor giving any honor to the god of the Christians. So in view of our benevolence and the established custom by which we invariably grant pardon to all men, we have thought proper in this matter also to extend our clemency most gladly, so that Christians may again exist and rebuild the houses in which they used to meet, on condition that they do nothing contrary to public order.... Therefore, in view of this our clemency, they are in duty bound to beseech their own god for our security, and that of the state and of themselves, in order that in every way the state may be preserved in health and they may be able to live free from anxiety in their own homes.”

After eight years of persecution, Christians again were permitted to build their churches, if only they would pray for the recovery of the dying emperor.

